

Title: "A BOX FOR PACKAGING A VOTING MACHINE"

The present invention relates to a box for packaging pieces of electronic equipment, more specifically a box for packaging voting machines, such as those used by electoral authorities in the last Brazilian elections.

5 Description of the Prior Art

Elections in Brazil have been the cause of worldwide polemic since the electronic voting system was implemented, by which the voter, instead of filling in a ballot and inserting it into a canvas ballot-box, digitizes the numbers of his candidates on an apparatus called electronic voting machine, 10 which registers the total of votes and makes it easy to find out the total of the results.

Said electronic voting machines are usually carried in cardboard boxes throughout the country during their distribution to the various electoral sections all over the national territory. Obviously, the packaging of these voting machines in cardboard boxes results in subjecting them to bad weather, 15 possible impacts, corrosion, moisture, among others. In addition, such boxes may facilitate access to the voting machines by tamperers and others who may be interested in illegally manipulating the voting machine.

Cardboard also has other disadvantages, such as for example, 20 wear due to weathering and the need to assemble boxes for using them, so that the operations of assembling and disassembling make the folds and the structure of the boxes weak, thus reducing their useful life. In addition, there is the environmental issue, since cardboard is produced from a raw material obtained by felling trees.

Finally, the identification of electronic voting machines is made 25 by filling in blanc fields on the cardboard itself of the boxes that contain them, so that any external agent may damage the identification of a voting machine, as for example, rain, air moisture, or a tear or any other damage to the surface of the box. Moreover, the marking with paint on the box body itself 30 may prevent it from being used in other situations. Due to all these factors mentioned above, in all elections that are carried out it is necessary to acquire new cardboard boxes for packaging the electronic voting machines,

which results in a considerable expenditure for the electoral authorities.

Summary of the Invention

Having in mind the various disadvantages of the art used before, the objective of the present invention is to provide a box for packaging electronic voting machines that will protect them against bad weather, impacts, fraud and tampering attempts. It is further desired that such a box should have a long useful life, that is to say, that it can be used several times.

This objective is achieved by means of a box made of reinforced plastic, which may comprise at least one identification means on one of its faces. The box according to the present invention packages an electronic voting machine in an optimized way, as well as any other electronic equipment that needs similar care, such as protection against weathering, impacts and tampering, since it is produced from a resistant material and has a viewing window that enables one to place and remove an identification of the voting machine.

Brief Description of the Drawing

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the box of the present invention.

Figure 2 shows a side view of the box according to the present invention, with an identification means that enables one to insert identification information.

Figure 3 is a front view of the box according to the present invention, illustrating an embodiment with a viewing window for placing identification of the electronic voting machine.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of the box 10 according to the present invention, in which one can identify a main body 11, shaped to permit stacking, for instance the trapezoidal shape, a cover 12, and an identification means 20, which preferably consists of a cut-out in the cover that enables one to view a part of the border 18, for placing the identification of a voting machine inside the box.

The box 10 may be produced by any known process, being preferably manufactured by the plastic-injection process from a thermoplastic

material, such as polypropylene.

As can be seen in the figure 1, the cover 12 fits onto the upper part of the body 11 and is not integral with it. However, the present invention further relates to boxes on which the covers may fit as a closure into any part 5 of the box, as for instance the side walls or even at the lower part. In addition, the cover 12 may also be built either integrally with or molded to the main body 11, fitting into the latter by means of an articulation or any other suitable means.

The box is manufactured so that two or more boxes may be 10 stacked in the closed conditions and/or in the opened condition, so as to facilitate the storage thereof. The box may further have holders 16 provided at one or more borders 18 of the main body 11 to facilitate transport thereof, as well as shoulder belts (not shown) secured to the borders 18 of the box, enabling one to carry the box easily handing from one's shoulder.

15 One may also use special materials for manufacturing the boxes, such as materials comprising additives that protect the inside of the box against ultraviolet rays.

The fitting between the cover 12 and the main body 11 is such 20 that any adequate sealing means may be used, such as disposable seals, sealing tapes, among others. The cover 12 may have slots 17 in its upper surface, which enable one to arrange sealing tapes onto the cover 12. One may also provide bores or locks 19 at the borders of the main body 11 and also at the cover 12, permitting the passage of various types of seals, for example, the strap seal (not shown).

25 The fitting of the cover/body assembly is such that it guarantees the basic tightness, preventing the voting machines from suffering the action of moisture when stored, and from being reached by drops and sprinkles during transportation and storage.

In figure 2, one of the preferred embodiments of the identification 30 means may be better viewed. A cut-out 20 is provided in the fitting border of the cover 12, so as to permit access to a portion of the border 18 of the main body 11. In this region, one may arrange a label 21, an identifying card or

any other adequate means for identifying the electronic voting machine inside the box.

The present invention further allows one or more identification means 20 to be provided on the faces of the box 10, so that one can view 5 such an identification from any side thereof.

In another embodiment of the present invention, a viewing window 13 may be better seen, which may consist of a plastic plate, adhesive, recess or other similar means and is preferably secured to a wall 14 of the box by means of adequate securing devices. The identification of the 10 electronic voting machine may be made by putting a label or document, for example, in the space provided between the wall 14 and the viewing window 13.

In addition, the viewing window 13 is preferably transparent and produced from any adequate material that enables one to see through it. The 15 viewing window 13 may also be arranged at two or more walls, as well as at the cover of the box, enabling one to see from above.

Inside the box, internal cradles are provided (not shown) for accommodating an electronic voting machine, so as to protect it against shocks and vibrations. Such cradles may be made from polyurethane, polexan, 20 isopor, among other materials or provided while molding the box itself. One may also provide internal cradles for accommodating the command system of the electronic voting machine, which consists of an apparatus smaller than the voting machine and mini-printers that may be easily accommodated close to the voting machine inside the box. The other cables and pins necessary to 25 operate the electronic voting machine may also be duly accommodated inside the box.

In addition, in order to guarantee the elimination of moisture from the inside of the box, one may also provide a support inside it for a dehumidifying element (not shown).

30 Optionally, the box may have a transparent or partly transparent window (not shown) in at least one of its faces, which enables one to view the inside, if desired. The main body and the cover may further include struc-

tural elements such as internal ribs, so as to reinforce the box structure.

Described on the bases of an embodiment illustrated in the drawings, the present invention as described above comprises other embodiments, which are limited only by the scope defined in the accompanying
5 claims.